

**In the Claims:**

1. (Currently amended) A method of loading a container with a defined quantity of ~~product powder~~ which comprises:

- a) i) providing a perforated plate which has first and second sides and a perforation which has a first opening in the first side and a second opening in the second side;
  - ii) closing off the perforation at its second opening by locating a closing member at the second side of the perforated plate;
- b) directing powder through the first opening into said closed-off perforation onto the closing member by the action of ~~a~~ moving a first leveler blade on a sweeping path relative to the perforated plate to fill the closed-off perforation with powder; and
- c) transferring the contents of the perforation to said container;

wherein in step b) the first leveler blade is non-contactingly spaced from the first side of the perforated plate and presents a forward acute angle to the sweeping path so that as the blade moves on the sweeping path it:

exerts a non-gravitation force directed toward the first opening upon the region of powder positioned over the first opening to assist the powder flow into the first opening as the leveler blade passes over said first opening; and  
leaves powder behind on the first side at a pre-selected positive height above said first side of said plate.

2. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the closing off is achievable by the use of a blanking plate.

3. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the closing off is achievable by the use of a blanking pin inserted into the perforation.

4. (Original) A method according to claim 3, wherein the blanking pin is moveable within the perforation to adjust the volume of the closed-off perforation.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the diameter of the closed-off perforation is between 1.5 and 15 mm.

7. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein said first leveler blade moves on a linear sweeping path.

8. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the forward acute angle is between 1 and 60°.

9. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 8, wherein the forward acute angle is between 5° and 25°.

10. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the first leveler blade presents multiple forward acute angles to the linear sweeping path.

11. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 10, wherein the first leveler blade is curved in form.

12. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 11 wherein the first leveler blade is articulated in form.

13. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the first leveler blade has a flat tail section.

14. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 7, comprising plural movements of the first leveler relative to the perforated plate prior to transferring the contents of the perforation to said container.

15. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 7, wherein a thin layer of powder is left on the first side of the perforated plate after movement of the first leveler blade.

16. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 15 wherein the depth of said thin layer of powder is from 3 to 20 mm.

17. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 16 wherein the depth of said thin layer of powder is from 4 to 8 mm.

18. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 7, wherein the powder is further directable by at least one subsequent leveler blade.

19. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 18 wherein the at least one subsequent leveler blade is positioned at a distance from the first side of the perforated plate and the distance from the subsequent leveler blade to the first side of the perforated plate and is equal to or less than the distance from the first leveler blade to the first side of the perforated plate.

20. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 19 wherein the ~~the~~ first leveler blade is positioned from 0 to 12 mm farther from the first side of the perforated plate than the at least one subsequent leveler blade.

21. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 20 wherein the first leveler blade is positioned from 1 to 3 mm farther from the first side of the perforated plate than the at least one subsequent leveler blade.

22-23. (Cancelled)

24. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, additionally comprising removing excess powder from said perforated plate subsequent to directing powder into the perforation.

25. (Original) A method according to claim 24, comprising removing said excess powder by the action of a wiper.

26. Cancelled

27. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein direction of powder into the closed-off perforation and transfer into the container is a continuous step.

28. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein transfer of the contents of the perforation to the container comprises:

- a) reopening the perforation;
- b) placing the container in registration with the perforation; and
- c) transferring the contents of the perforation into the container.

29- 36. Cancelled

37. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the container is a blind cavity.

38. (Original) A method according to claim 37, wherein the blind cavity is selected from the group consisting of a blister pocket, an injection moulded plastic pocket, a capsule and a bulk container.

39. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, additionally comprising applying a lid to the container to protect the contents therein.

40. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the powder comprises a medicament.

41. (Original) A method according to claim 40, wherein the medicament is selected from the group consisting of albuterol, salmeterol, fluticasone propionate and beclomethasone dipropionate and salts or solvates thereof and any mixtures thereof.

42 – 80. (Cancelled)

Add the following new claim:

81. A method of loading a defined quantity of a powdered medicament formulation into a container for use in an inhalation device, which method comprises:

- a) i) providing a perforated plate which has first and second sides and a perforation having a first opening in the first side and a second opening in the second side, and  
ii) closing off the perforation at the second opening by locating a closing member at the second side of the perforated plate;
- b) providing at least one leveler blade which is non-contactingly spaced from the first side of the perforated plate and presents a forward acute angle to a sweeping path which the at least one leveler blade is to follow relative to the perforated plate;
- c) directing powdered medicament formulation from a reservoir thereof, which is disposed on the first side of the perforated plate, through the first opening into said closed-off perforation onto the closing member by moving the at least one leveler blade through the reservoir along the sweeping path relative to the perforated plate to fill the closed-off perforation with the defined quantity of powdered medicament formulation and leave an excess of the powdered medicament formulation on the first side of the perforated plate overlying the filled perforation;
- d) removing the excess powdered medicament formulation from the first side of the perforated plate by the action of a wiper;
- e) introducing a compacting pin into the first opening of the perforation and compacting the defined quantity of powdered medicament formulation in the perforation between the compacting pin and the closing member; and

- f) transferring the content of the perforation to said container by:
  - i) moving the closing member to reopen the second opening of the perforation,
  - ii) placing the container in registration with the second opening, and
  - iii) moving the compacting pin in the perforation towards the second opening.